

# **“On the Bushmen and Hottentots”**

**by Doctor Laurent Féraud**

ANTHROPOLOGY SOCIETY OF PARIS  
Meeting of January 8, 1880

**Robert K. Stevenson: Translator and Editor**



Bushman drawing

## **“On the Bushman and Hottentots”**

Messieurs, for the last two years I have lived in southern Africa, and today I wish to present to the Society copies of some drawings executed by Bushmen. These copies, as you can see, are made uniformly in red and black. This latter color, however, is never employed by the Bushmen themselves because they do not admit that their color is such; and, in fact, they are rather yellowish in appearance, with slightly oblique and narrow eyes. This drawing that I'm now holding represents, in my opinion, a sorcerer in the process of casting a spell on a bull; two women are with him. I should add the Bushmen drawings are often lewd.

The Bushmen race is very much reduced nowadays. From what I have seen only one twentieth of their race is pure; the others are crossbred with Hottentot blood; their height I estimate to be between 1.3 and 1.5 meters.



The Bushmen possess narrow and oblique eyes,  
as does this middle-aged male Bushman.

In Capetown Province tumuli are in existence; people attribute them to a massacre of Hottentots that took place there three hundred years ago. Monsieur Hugo, a colonist of French origin, has excavated these burial mounds and has found inside them weapons used by Bushmen.

The Bushmen have a curious mythology and astronomy, assigning to stars the names of animals of which they avail themselves. According to them, the phases of the moon are due to the sun cutting off portions of it in order to eat; and when the moon is thus reduced to nothing, the story goes that it has supplied the sun with the means to grow in order to attend to the sustenance of its newborn child (that is, the new moon).

It turns out that the language of the Bushmen is very difficult to speak on account of the *clicks* which characterize it, and which are very hard to imitate; they have a labial click, a dental click, a lateral click, a guttural one, and others also that are intermediate between the preceding.

The Hottentots, by contrast, employ only six different clicks; the Kaffirs but three: in this manner the name of the Zulu king—Cetiwayo—who recently acquired such a great celebrity presents a click on the first syllable; we Europeans have replaced this sound with a *c*.

## DISCUSSION

**Doctor PAUL TOPINARD.** The Anthropology Society is already familiar with the Bushmen drawings that have been sent to us by Monsieur Todd, which noticeably differ from the ones that you have shown us today, Doctor Féraud. Among other things, I find significant the exaggerated steatopygia that the personages in Monsieur Todd's drawings present. I am surprised, Doctor Féraud, not to also see the same in the drawings you've brought.